



Chesapeake Bay Program

A Watershed Partnership

ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT FOR THE 2002 CHESAPEAKE BAY LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN

[Replacing the 1996 Local Government Participation Action Plan]

*T*he Chesapeake Bay Program has, for many years, recognized the critical role of local governments in the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. In 1995, the Chesapeake Executive Council signed Directive 95-1, the *Local Government Partnership Initiative*, which recognized the importance of engaging the Bay watershed's 1,650 plus local governments as partners in the Bay restoration effort. The Directive called for the establishment of a Local Government Participation Plan, which was adopted by the Executive Council on October 10, 1996.

The *Chesapeake 2000* agreement established a goal to "Strengthen the Chesapeake Bay Program's ability to incorporate local governments into the policy decision making process." *Chesapeake 2000* further called for a reevaluation of the 1996 Action Plan, and the Chesapeake Bay Program's Local Government Advisory Committee has successfully accomplished that goal. The *2002 Chesapeake Bay Local Government Participation Action Plan* is a blueprint to further engage local governments in our joint efforts to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Local government outreach efforts identified five broad areas with detailed recommendations for more effective local government participation in the Chesapeake Bay Program and implementation of the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement:

- ❖ **Enhance the Effectiveness of the Local Government Advisory Committee in the Chesapeake Bay Program:** It is not the responsibility of the Local Government Advisory Committee to speak for local governments in all Bay Program work groups and task forces, but to ensure that the infrastructure exists for local governments to have meaningful opportunities for input into important decisions.
- ❖ **Enhance Two-Way Communication Between Local Governments and the Chesapeake Bay Program:** Two-way communication will ensure that local governments are vested in Bay watershed restoration efforts and that the Bay Program (the collective Bay Program and the signatory states) is making decisions with the best possible information.
- ❖ **Open the Door to Local Government Participation in the Decision-Making Process:** Decisions made at the Chesapeake Bay Program will benefit from direct local government participation. Participation of local governments at all levels of the Chesapeake Bay Program needs to be increased.
- ❖ **Provide Financial and Technical Assistance for and to Support Local Governments:** The *Chesapeake 2000* agreement has far reaching fiscal and budgetary implications, and much of the burden will fall on local governments. Technical and financial assistance for and to local governments will serve as a critical foundation for achieving Bay watershed restoration goals.
- ❖ **Recognize Local Government Efforts:** Local governments should be recognized for achievements toward restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Recognition highlights local government commitment and highlights success stories for emulation by others.



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e the undersigned, gratefully acknowledge the efforts of the Local Government Advisory Committee and accept their recommendations contained in the 2002 *Local Government Participation Action Plan*. By accepting this *Action Plan*, we reaffirm our commitment to restore and protect the quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed by further strengthening partnerships with local governments throughout the region.

Date: October 31, 2002

CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



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